

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated September 29, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 10-13, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, on the basis of the Burkhardt patent (US 5,553,632). The remaining claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Burkhardt patent, either by itself or in view of secondary references. To clarify the distinctions between the present invention and the prior art represented by the Burkhardt patent, original claims 1-17 have been canceled, and new claims 18-25 are presented herein.

Claim 18 recites a hair styling attachment comprising a main housing and a plurality of elongated hair styling members which are disposed so that corresponding thermally conductive hair styling surfaces on an adjacent pair of members are oppositely aligned, to compressively engage tresses of hair between the opposed styling surfaces. The claim further recites that each such hair styling surface is freely rotatable about an axis which is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the elongated hair styling member. This feature, coupled with the claimed feature of thermally conductive hair styling surfaces, facilitates efficient hair styling while limiting tension that is applied to the hair. The thermally conductive hair styling surface ensures an efficient conversion of heat from that exiting the hot air blower to that which can be used to for hair styling. In contrast to this claimed arrangement, the hair styling surfaces on the attachment disclosed in the Burkhardt patent engage hair by tension and hot hair is applied separately to the hair underneath the comb teeth. The hair engaging tension has to be carefully controlled, or otherwise hair can be damaged by excess tension due to engagement by the teeth 18. In the presently claimed

invention, the thermally conductive hair styling surfaces are adapted to compressively engage tresses of hair, while being freely rotatable to limit the tension that is exerted to the hair. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 18 patentably defines the invention over the Burkhardt reference.

Claim 19 introduces the further feature that the plurality of hair styling members are disposed on a row "and moveable against spring bias relative to each other and relative to said main housing along a transversal direction." This additional feature provides flexibility to the hair styling members, so that the spacing between an adjacent pair of hair styling members is not limited by the fixed spacing of adjacent teeth, as in the case of the Burkhardt attachment.

Claim 21 recites that each of the intermediate hair styling members comprises a pair of cylindrical rollers of thermally conductive material, with each cylindrical roller being freely rotatable about an axis which is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the hair styling member, and with the cylindrical surface of the thermally conductive roller forming the hair styling surface. The use of a pair of freely rotatable cylindrical rollers, as claimed, provides a convenient and simple implementation of the advantageous features described above.

Claim 22 recites that the styling members are moveable along a predefined track. This arrangement facilitates a controlled range of movement for the styling members.

Claim 23 recites that the styling members are deflectable about the longitudinal direction. This feature provides additional flexibility to the arrangement of the hair styling members, so that an enlarged space for capturing hair reception can be created between an adjacent pair of hair styling members.

Claim 24 recites that a pair of adjacent hair styling members are disposed so that their convex surfaces are adjacently disposed and face one another. Forming the corresponding pair of hair styling surfaces with opposed convex surfaces provides an appropriate level of pressure on the hair to be styled for a given amount of spring pressure, and therefore presents an additional advantage over the arrangement of the Burkhardt patent.

Claim 25 recites that each hair styling member has a generally rounded head at its longitudinal end. The enlarged space that is defined between an adjacent pair of rounded heads enables larger tresses of hair to be accommodated.

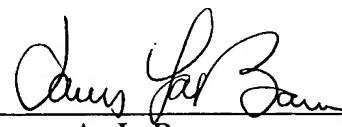
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 18-25 are patentably distinct from the disclosure of the Burkhardt patent, whether considered by itself or in combination with the cited secondary references.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections based upon the cited references, and allowance of all pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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